

## Shower Room

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## Shower Room

by [peaceshire](#)

### Summary

There was a long, narrow shower room located near an elevator in Impel Down. Being thrown into it was not a treat. But for two particular former prisoners, it became quite the fond memory. It was the place they first met, after all, and where they first began to fall in love. /// A sweet, fluffy CrocBug one-shot that switches between their perspectives.

### Notes

Please note the content warning.

Non-consensual sex between Impel Down guards and prisoners is mentioned multiple times, but not written out in explicit detail.

Overall, the mood of the fic is romantic and light-hearted! I hope you enjoy it!

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

There was a long, narrow shower room located near an elevator in Impel Down. The entrance looked like any other cell, with thick rods of iron perfectly spaced to lock you in. But the floor was a peachy tile, surprisingly clean, even within the curves of the grout. A metal bench sat near the front, simple but wide and sturdy. It sat just out of reach of where the shower head could spray, and this particular one lovingly produced warm water. That was a rare treat within the prison.

But being thrown in this room was *not* a treat. The guards would undo only one of your sea-prism handcuffs, so that you were still powerless but could at least bathe yourself. And then they'd shove

you inside, flinging a towel at your tired body, ordering you to clean up in gruff, unapathetic voices.

Buggy hit the floor of the cell just so, letting out a shrill noise that only got louder as a rolled towel landed with a thud against his head.

“Shower, whore.”

The prisoner whisked his head around as the door clicked shut, with every intention of screaming an insult. But at that same moment something bubbled within his guts and he had to bend forwards, coughing up bile and globs of sticky white liquid as the cold sound of boots on stone trailed away behind him. He banged a fist against the floor, taking in a deep breath of the shower’s steam and preparing his lungs for a much needed shout.

“Why me? What the hell!? Why am I here again? Again and again and again!?” he complained, pounding at the ground to emphasize each word. There were women here, weren’t there? And younger men, prettier men. So why did he keep ending up in this place, ass sore and stomach churning. Weren’t the rest of the prison’s tortures enough?

He was too old for this! It wasn’t the way his life was supposed to go!! He had to get out of there, before he truly lost his mind!!

“Whyyyyy!!” he whined, softer and more pathetic, pressing his forehead against the damp tile. And then he heard a deep laugh.

It rumbled, nearly moved the room, attacking Buggy’s ears with staccato punches. He shook, realizing suddenly that he wasn’t alone in the shower room.

He should have noticed earlier - the water was already going, and there was a neatly organized pile of belongings on the usually empty bench. But he’d been distracted by his own suffering, of course!

Why was there someone else here? That hadn’t happened before. He’d assumed it wasn’t supposed to happen, but maybe he’d just been lucky all those times before. Maybe they enjoyed stuffing the room full of cum-filled prisoners, making them clean their abused bodies in front of each other, naked and ashamed. He shivered at the thought.

“Well, aren’t you a miserable thing.”

Buggy peaked through the strands of blue hair that had draped around his face, cautiously peering upward to meet the eyes of his companion.

The man before him was incredibly tall, head not far from the ceiling. He stood naked and smiling, his dark hair was wet and slick against his scalp and a nasty looking scar sat in a mean line across his cheeks. His body was incredible, wide and muscular and fierce, but somehow still supple and soft. He’d stepped out of the stream of water, but droplets still trickled down his form in envious trails, making the man’s ashen skin sparkle in the dim light.

But most alarmingly, there was a large golden hook affixed to one of his arms, and it hovered at his side effortlessly. The tip was blunted, but it looked heavy and evil, and when the man stepped even closer Buggy could see his poor reflection in its shining surface.

Sir Crocodile.

Of course Buggy had heard of him. A former member of the Seven Warlords, sure, but there were even more fascinating, terrifying rumors about this pirate. The word on the sea was that he’d lost his hand challenging Whitebeard- Whitebeard, of all people!- when he was still a rookie. Buggy couldn’t even fathom it. He’d seen the man’s power when he was still a kid, watched him take on Captain Roger with a playful smile on his face. He recalled telling his crew that the one person they could *never* pick a fight with was him. Whitebeard.

But this flashy man had done it. Was he insanely brave, or insanely stupid? Either way, something about it had drawn Buggy to his name. He’d kept up with his conquests in the papers, even felt a sense of joy when he’d earned the safety of Warlord status.

And now, he was standing tall and dark and, admittedly, handsome before him, a wry smile on his lips.

Buggy scrambled, shifting into a polite sitting position and combing nervous fingers through his messy hair.

“Sorry, sorry! I didn’t know you were here!” he screeched, plastering on a fake, toothy grin. “I’ll shut up now! I’ll shut up!”

Crocodile squatted, brows furrowing. Buggy noted with a twist of his gut that the man's genitals, flaccid as they were, brushed the floor. His good hand clutched at the younger man's chin, tipping it up with curiosity.

"That's unexpected. You sure are ugly to have become a regular visitor here," he mused, a sparkle in his dark eyes. "What's with that weird nose?"

Buggy nearly swallowed his tongue, using every last ounce of his self control not to have an outburst. Just how much worse was this day going to get? He'd been bent over and fucked from behind, made to swallow several men's cum, and now a pirate he'd admired was pointing out his big, red nose. He wanted to scream! And cry a little.

But he managed to refrain, holding the tension in his jaw.

"I don't get it either," he responded, using his deep, serious register. "I seriously don't get it. It's like a bad joke, really."

At that, Crocodile smirked and released his face, moving instead to finger through a blue lock that had fallen back into Buggy's face.

"Maybe it's this pretty hair of yours that keeps them after you?" he wondered aloud, then stood and walked a few steps away, whisking a towel off of the bench and patting it against his face. "Have you considered shaving it?"

Well, there was no way he was going to do that now. Not when the sound of the older man's voice saying *pretty* was dancing through Buggy's head like a flashy mantra. So he didn't say anything, just let the awkward silence fill the room, imagining it like an invisible wall between them.

Crocodile moved casually, drying himself off and then fetching his underwear. As he bent, giving Buggy an enticing view of his ass, he glanced back at the smaller man still sitting on the floor.

"Aren't you going to shower?"

Buggy flushed crimson, his heart immediately racing. It was the combination of getting caught staring at the man's body, and imagining getting naked in front of him, that had his pulse reaching a dangerous speed. No way, he couldn't do it. If it had been anyone else, any other damned

prisoner, but it was THE Sir Crocodile, and he was cooler and more handsome than his bounty posters. And he'd called Buggy ugly, and made fun of his nose. If he got naked and earned any more insults, he wouldn't recover.

He grabbed at his *pretty* hair, stammering. "I'll wait! I'll wait!!"

Crocodile gave him an amused, interested look as he pulled on his black and white striped top, the sleeve of his left arm particularly frayed and stretched from being forced over his hook many times.

"They'll beat you if they come to retrieve me and you're just sitting there."

"That's fine!" Buggy urged, slightly panicked. "It's no problem! Just relax and I'll be quiet and wait here!! No worries!! You can ignore me!!"

The older man raised an eyebrow, sitting down on the bench with wide legs. "What are you blushing for?"

Buggy made a squeaky noise, waving his hands around incredulously. "I'm not! I'm not blushing!!"

Crocodile laughed. "You're as red as your nose."

"Who," Buggy erupted, finally losing his cool, "are you calling Big, Red Nose, bastard!?"

"You, of course." The dark-headed man smiled even wider, looking smugly entertained. He spread his arms wide, as if to say *what are you going to do about it*.

Buggy screwed up his face, embarrassed at his temper, but relieved that for whatever reason the former warlord wasn't angry over it. He just needed to keep his wits about him, act mature. Act cool.

"Should I give you some advice, red-nose?" Crocodile asked, crossing his arms and looking down on him pointedly. "To help prevent you from ending up here? So you don't have to cry and bang

against the floor in your sad despair?”

“Why should I need advice from you!!” Buggy yelled, immediately forgetting to act cool. “You’re here, too, aren’t you!? So where do you get off talking to me like that? And don’t call me red-nose!”

“I’m nothing like you,” the older man responded in a cool tone, suddenly retrieving a cigar and lighter from his things. “What I’m doing is an equal exchange. *You’re* just being used up like a slutty toy.”

Buggy’s skin burned even hotter, tears involuntarily welling in his eyes at the cruel words. Crocodile lit the cigar effortlessly with just his one hand and hook, and as he took in the first puff, his features smoothed into a happily relaxed expression.

“I suck a dick,” he smiled, letting smoke billow from his mouth, “I get a warm shower and a cigar. What is it that you get, red-nose? Hmm?”

Buggy looked at his knees, feeling even more ashamed than before. He spoke through gritted teeth. “Then what’s your grand advice, exactly? I’m listening.”

Crocodile stood again, walking over and pressing a bare foot hard into Buggy’s thigh. His hook trailed against the stubble of his chin before settling behind his ear as he leaned down, encompassing the smaller man in his shadow. Buggy winced and trembled, leaning back as much as he could, eyes blinking out tears.

“Your reactions are too good,” he whispered, dark eyes peering into his face, trailing down his neck and chest, taking him all in and making Buggy feel hopelessly, flashily vulnerable. “I can tell from just our small interaction. You’re loud aren’t you? Begging and crying, stuttering out empty threats, shaking and shivering at their every touch. That’s exactly what men like them want most, don’t you know?”

Buggy clutched a hand around the golden hook, eyes still fixed on the floor as he worked to stay calm and focused. “I’m ... I’m not like that-”

“Yes you are,” Crocodile interrupted. “And you’re bashful too, aren’t you? Rather take a beating than clean the cum out of your ass in front of another prisoner? Isn’t that cute.”

His grip tightened on the metal, chest swelling until he instinctively looked upward and locked eyes with the taller man. “W-what, what? There’s not! There’s not cum in my ass!”

Crocodile laughed, seemingly surprised. “Lucky you, then, idiot!” Then he leaned in even closer, frowning. “Seriously, give it a shot. Keep your mouth shut, pretend you’re a robot. Don’t protest, don’t make those squeaky noises, don’t cry. They’ll get bored and leave you alone.”

Buggy couldn’t take the condescension any longer, his ego feeling like a shriveled up worm inside of him. He brushed away then, standing and ripping off his clothes in a bout of frustration. He glanced backward, swallowing.

“That’s a lot easier said than done, you know.”

“I do know,” he answered, leaning back upright and propping himself up against the wall. Buggy could feel him staring now, and it was causing his heart to ache, so he hurried into the stream of warm water to busy himself with washing up. He needed a distraction from those hot eyes, that callous way of speaking. But he also couldn’t help himself from continuing the conversation, mentally noting that this may be his only chance to ever speak with the renowned pirate one on one.

“You know, do you?” Buggy retorted, splashing water across his face. “Then how do you overcome it?”

“I pretend I’m doing it with someone I like,” he answered, then took another long draw of his cigar. “Think you could start there, red-nose? Would that help shut you up?”

Buggy wrinkled his brow, anxiously visualizing what kind of person Crocodile might like, worrying pointlessly over how different they must be from a sorry-pirate like himself.

“I don’t have anyone like that.”

“Really? Nobody?”

“Nobody,” Buggy mumbled, scrubbing the skin of his arm a little too roughly and wincing as his loose handcuff swung back into his own skin with the movement. Before Crocodile could say anything else, they both turned at the sound of the metal door clanking back open.

“Come on, Crocodile. You’re going back to your cell.”

The tall man acquiesced with a soft smirk, obediently lifting his wrist so it could be cuffed to his hook again, head casually rolling back towards Buggy’s direction, cigar clenched in his teeth.

“What’s your name, by the way?”

“Buggy.”

“You already know mine, right?”

The younger man scoffed, flustered. “No,” he lied.

“Crocodile,” he called out as he was escorted away at a brisk pace. “I hope my advice helps, red-nose Buggy!”

Buggy threw down the soap, yelling after him loudly.

“Stop calling me red-nose!!!”

He sighed, grasping at his forehead as he was locked into the room once again.

Try not to react, huh? Be quiet. Lifeless. Imagine it’s someone he liked.

Buggy bit his lip, realizing under the streaming water that there was only one person he’d ever had *that* kind of feeling towards, and that person had just walked out of the room.

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“Come in.”



Crocodile tapped his cigar against the ashtray on the desk, pushing around some papers with his hook. The flap to the tent where he was working pushed open, and in walked a disgruntled looking Buggy the Clown. He was dressed casually, a red long sleeved top and loose pants, his blonde hair pulled up into a tight ponytail. That damned blonde hair.

He liked the blue hair, it was a dazzling color, but (particularly when pulled into a ponytail) it reminded him of an annoying princess and a wild series of unfortunate events. But blonde hair, well, there was something about it. Perhaps because it reminded him of someone he'd truly respected, in their prime.

When Buggy had first bleached his hair, it'd come as quite the shock. Honestly, it'd pissed Crocodile off. He was already struggling with maddening, disgusting feelings towards the miserable little thing, and then he went and added blonde hair on top of it. Surely Buggy was unaware, as he was with most things. But sometimes it felt *as if* he must know, because he kept doing all the right things to work Crocodile up, drive him mad, tempt him nearly blind.

It shouldn't have been possible. When they'd first met, all the way back in Impel Down, that should have been the most of their relationship. But he found himself sitting in his cell, remembering the wavering of the younger man's voice, the hotness of his tears, the feeling of his supple thigh under his bare foot. His shivers, his expressiveness, his pathetic show of pride. He was annoying, weak, mostly intolerable.

And, for whatever reason, Crocodile wanted him desperately.

He could still feel the sudden pinch of relief he'd experienced when he met him during the breakout. The sparkle of jealousy when he heard the hushed excitement of the crowd as it was revealed he'd been a blood brother to Red Hair Shanks and had sailed with the former pirate king. The uncontrollable urge to approach him after they'd both survived the war on Marineford.

It was a lucky thing the clown was gullible, because he'd accepted a loan from Crocodile without even an ounce of suspicion. He was a man with a reputation for being hard to work with, who generally avoided making deals with other pirates. He didn't even like to employ pirates if he could help it, preferring to work with spies and bounty hunters. A more clever pirate would have suspected ulterior motives, surely- but Buggy accepted it happily. Crocodile could still see the relieved, prideful smile on the younger man's face, the smear of red lipstick on his teeth that he'd wanted to lick off.

When the warlord system was disbanded, he'd felt annoyingly excited to meet the clown again, and even more grateful he'd carefully given himself an excuse to do so. The owed money was a perfect

guise, after all.

Not that he was happy with being labeled as his subordinate in Cross Guild, of course. But he got to see him every day, get closer to him slowly, tease him and observe him and sometimes even touch him in passing. Lately, he'd turned the younger man into his errand boy, and was very much enjoying the mixture of fear and annoyance that always laced his silly, stupid face when he returned from a task.

And he was seeing it right now, as Buggy approached his desk with a huff and plopped down the morning's newspaper. Ah, he was so easy to read. Crocodile could tell by his posture that he thought this was all a show of power, bullying him into menial tasks. And it was, certainly, but it was also an excuse to be near him. Otherwise, the clown skillfully avoided him, much to Crocodile's dismay.

"Took you long enough," he responded, talking around his cigar with a smirk. Buggy's eyebrows furrowed, distorting his face makeup. Crocodile wanted to see it even *more* distorted, smeared and sweating off his face. He crossed his legs, clearing his throat as the younger man turned to leave the tent. "That's not all I need from you."

The clown turned on his heel, deliberate and tense. He smiled widely, but Crocodile could see the tension in his jaw. "Whatever can I do for you? Just say the word!"

Strip naked. Get on all fours. Stick out your tongue.

"Come hold my ashtray."

Buggy raised an eyebrow, confused. Crocodile used his hook to grab up the newspaper, then leaned back into the large leather chair and swung his legs up onto the desk. He nodded towards the ashtray.

"It's annoying to have to lean forward each time. Come hold it for me while I read the paper."

A wash of disdain flashed across the clown's face, but then he forced it into a cheerful grin. "I'd be happy to!"

Crocodile watched him with dark eyes as he walked closer, grabbing the ashtray and holding it

gingerly in his cupped hands. The dark color of its plastic was stark against the white fabric of his gloves, and even the way he'd chosen to hold it was impossibly cute. When he took position next to him, he tapped his cigar into it as a matter of course.

"Mm. Perfect, thank you."

Buggy nodded, then averted his wide eyes. He was close, so close that Crocodile could smell a bit of cologne- clean, floral. He wouldn't have thought him the type, but he was someone who woke up early and carefully applied a coat of makeup each morning, so maybe it shouldn't have been surprising. And he was good at it, he had to admit. Sharp, well-applied shapes decorated his well-structured face, all framed within a masculine hairline. He wasn't actually ugly, besides the weird nose. Buggy made exaggerated faces that were often less than appealing, but when he was at rest, he was actually just shy of handsome.

His body, on the other hand, was perfect. Lean, toned, flexible, with a healthy pink complexion. He trailed his eyes up the muscles of his arms, noting that his neck was perhaps a bit too pink today, red even. His face too- oh.

He was blushing. How delightful.

"You're ..." Buggy suddenly said, head turning even further away and giving Crocodile a nice view of the bead of sweat that was dripping down the back of his neck. "You're not reading the paper."

Oh. In fact, he wasn't. Crocodile smiled.

"Did you get too much sun, Buggy? You're red as a tomato."

"Whose nose is red like a tomato!?" Buggy retorted, spinning his face back around with an angry glare, dropping the ashtray onto the floor in the process. Then he screeched, splitting into several parts and rushing towards the mess he'd made. "Sorry, sorry! I'll clean it! I'll clean it!!"

As he moved frantically, his ponytail swung back and forth, its alluring color searing into Crocodile's eyes. He just had to go and bleach his hair, this guy. What was a hot-blooded man supposed to do?

“That’s no good, Buggy,” Crocodile mused, taking a long draw of his cigar and pushing out the smoke in a thin, billowing stream. “I need to tap my cigar again.”

“Uh, um, uh, I-!” the clown stammered, reforming into a squat on the ground and holding pieces of the broken plastic in despair. Crocodile let out a dramatic sigh.

“Guess you’ll have to do. Open up.”

Buggy froze, a tear dripping beautifully from one eye. “Wha ... what?”

“Open your mouth, idiot,” Crocodile demanded, excitement bubbling in his chest. He shouldn’t take it this far, shouldn’t tempt himself any further. But there was a good mood in the air, and Buggy was looking pathetic and adorable on the floor. He knew it would be more prudent to drop it there, but his self-control was at its limits.

Just a little more teasing than usual. He’d just go slightly further, not too far.

Buggy’s jaw slacked, and he crawled back a bit, slowly piecing things together. Crocodile furrowed his brow. “Are you going to make me ask twice?”

This got the younger man moving closer, and Crocodile had to hold his breath as, for some god-forsaken reason, Buggy chose to crawl towards him instead of simply stand up and walk. He was really blushing now, pointedly looking away to avoid eye contact. Even as he tipped his head back, mouth shaking but open, his gaze was fixed onto the corner of the room. Well, that was for the best. If he *had* made eye-contact at that moment, while he was on the floor in such a lewd position, Crocodile might have lost the last of his faculties.

“Good, good,” he cooed, voice dripping with condescension. Then he removed his cigar, lowering it slowly until its surface was knocking against the bottom row of Buggy’s straight, white teeth. The ash sparkled and crumbled, and the younger man’s pink tongue twitched in his mouth as it fell. Crocodile let out his breath then, feeling as if he might get sucked into that pink, wet space. He tapped again, dislodging a larger clump of debris and causing Buggy to cough loudly. He jerked back his hand, watching intensely as the clown gagged and spit up the gray material, noting the sore mark the heat of it had left behind on his tongue.

“Hey. Ashtrays shouldn’t make so much noise.”

Buggy winced, then reached out a shaky hand to grasp onto Crocodile's knee. It felt hot, sensual, it was maddening. Crocodile felt his spine stiffen despite himself. The younger man swiped at the tears forming in his eyes, then turned with a surprising mixture of embarrassment and determination. When he spoke, his tongue lolled out of his mouth, causing a lovable lisp.

"Just need a moment," he whined, pausing to choke down another cough, "Just a moment! Please ..."

Please. *Please.*

He shouldn't be allowed to say it, as polite as it was. Anyone else could say it, in fact they ought to if they dared to ask anything of him. But Buggy shouldn't say it, because the sound of the vulnerable word in his cracking voice was too sexy, too intoxicating, too maddening.

A rush of feeling sunk into his stomach, and Crocodile knew he was about to do something he shouldn't. There was no stopping it.

"Sit in my lap."

Buggy made an alarmed noise, but this time couldn't bring himself to question the order.

"I need my ashtray closer," Crocodile continued, letting down his legs and opening up his lap. "Like I said, it's annoying to have to lean over."

The younger pirate didn't move, just blinked back at him, somehow managing to blush even darker. It was even more apparent against that bleached hair. That damn hair, that was to blame for this. What was that brat thinking, dying it such a sexy color? Coming around with it tied up, exposing his nape, accentuating the manly structure of his jawline. He needed to just get in his lap already, hug him, kiss him, melt in his arms. Become his, his alone.

"Uh-oh," Crocodile whispered. "Is this ashtray broken, too? Should I throw them both in the trash?"

Buggy stood then, hands clenched into fists.

“For ...”

“Hmm? What’s that?”

“Forget it, Crocodile!” Buggy exclaimed, sniffing. “That’s going too far! I’m not gonna be your ashtray if I have to sit in your lap! Fuck off!”

Seriously?

He chose that moment to be brave?

Was he teasing him on purpose? Was this some sort of game? Was he actually aware of Crocodile’s feelings? Were these interactions of theirs actually carefully planned and measured, just to work him up and leave him reeling? How annoying. How frustrating. How impossible.

He shouldn’t even like this ugly, frivolous guy in the first place. Shouldn’t be wasting any of his precious time imagining him, watching him, playing out fake conversations with him. Buggy shouldn’t mean anything to him, so where did the clown get off rejecting him?

And why- seriously, why- did Crocodile want him even more for it?

“That hurts, Buggy,” he responded darkly, feeling a vein pulse in his forehead. “So eating my cigar ashes is fine, but sitting in my lap is too repulsive? How cruel. Makes me want to stuff this entire cigar down your throat, to be honest.”

Buggy yelped, stepping back a bit. “C-c-croc-baby!! That’s not what I meant, listen! Listen!! It’s just, well, its-”

“It’s what?” Crocodile interrupted, wrinkling his nose at the splash of pleasure that surfaced in his groin at the sound of the stupid pet name.

“It’s embarrassing!” Buggy finally admitted, grabbing at his face. “It’s flashily embarrassing!! I’ll die, I’ll simply die!!”

Crocodile let out a short laugh. This idiot. "It's just the two of us here, Buggy."

"That makes it worse, stupid!!!" he erupted, and suddenly his gloved hands flew over and grabbed into his collar. "I'm at my wits end, being around you! The distance keeps closing, no matter how hard I try to stay away! It's not good for my heart! My poor heart!! Have some mercy, you oaf!!"

A hazy delight settled into Crocodile's mind, and it was dangerous. His heart sped up in his chest, and his one hand moved to wrap itself around one of the disembodied gloves near his neck.

"What are you trying to say, exactly?" he asked, speaking slowly in an attempt to not betray his excitement. "Don't tell me, you've gone and developed a crush on me, clown?"

Buggy tried to pull his hands back, but Crocodile had them both in his grip now and could feel them trembling. He took many labored breaths, temporarily at a loss for words before his features settled into a resigned defeat.

"I know I'm just an ugly loser to you. I know it's disgusting, but .." Buggy paused, then stomped his foot in anger, his ponytail dancing behind him. "It's your fault, dammit! You went and said that weird stuff to me in Impel Down, and then, well ... don't get it wrong!!"

The clown crossed his arms then, flushing and looking away, tone shrill. "Don't get it wrong! It's not that I like you, I just associate you with sex, is all!! Because I tried to take your stupid advice, and I ended up accidentally thinking about you every time! So your face makes me remember doing ... *dirty* things! It's just an unfortunate association!"

"So you *did* take my advice?" Crocodile responded, tightening his grip on Buggy's hands, staring into him and feeling the tension of the moment weigh on his shoulders. He knew where he wanted this to go, but could it actually get there?

He knew what he wanted to think, but could it actually be true?

"I did," Buggy spat, "and it didn't even work, by the way! I was quiet, but it just flashily pissed them off! Then they did even worse things, trying to get me to break- it was really bad, you know!!"

He paused, then added respectfully. "I did manage to get some face makeup out of it, though. So thanks for giving me that idea, at least."

"When they fucked you," Crocodile said loudly, ignoring the current subject with a dry throat. "You thought of me? Is that what you said?" Buggy jolted, looking back at him with wide eyes.

"Because ... only because you gave me the advice ..."

"Because I gave you the advice in general," Crocodile started, pausing to brush Buggy's fingers across his lips, which caused the clown to make an adorably audible gulp. "Or because you were imagining someone you liked?"

"I told you," Buggy muttered, bashful and at a loss. "Don't get it wrong ..."

"I don't want to get it wrong," Crocodile responded, unable to keep himself from sounding terribly serious. *He was terribly serious, after all.* "Because I like you a lot, Buggy. If it's mutual, that would be mighty nice to know."

The blonde-haired man stared back at him incredulously, looking all around the room before focusing his eyes back towards him. "No you don't! Shut up!"

"That's no way to respond to a confession, now, is it?" Crocodile smiled smugly, but he didn't feel smug at all. His pulse was wild, as if his heart was shaking within his chest. He'd always assumed this would be nothing but a one-sided, weird obsession. Something he'd tip-toe around, enjoy in small little bursts, but never fully dive into. Buggy was a man, after all, and he'd been avoiding him. Crocodile thought for sure he actually hated him, resented him, despised him, feared him.

But if he *liked* him- no, he couldn't let his mind go there just yet. Couldn't imagine all the intimate things he wanted to do together, all the nasty things he wanted to whisper into those red ears, all the faces and noises he wanted to elicit.

Buggy was really struggling now, looking as if he wanted to run away and scream. Just what was going on inside that goofy little head of his? What would he say? Crocodile wished he'd just admit it.

Admit that he liked him. Admit it. Just admit it. He'd make him feel good. He'd hold him tenderly.



He'd spoil him rotten. He bore his eyes into the younger man, wishing he could send those words telepathically. If he had less pride, maybe he'd even say them out loud.

Admit it, Buggy. Admit-

"It wasn't a real confession," Buggy finally answered, straightening his arms. "It wasn't, but even if it was, I reject it. Like I said, I don't like you! But ..."

Crocodile's heart was sinking, and his limbs suddenly felt cold, and the moment he loosened his grip Buggy's hands flew away, reattaching to his wrists. He watched and listened with torturous interest.

"But if you still do that whole ... *equal exchange* thing," Buggy let one hand pull at his ponytail, the blonde strands dazzling when being gripped. "Then, I have some high-quality cigars I could part with ..."

How precious. How insanely, disgustingly, unfathomably precious.

Crocodile laughed, unable to help himself. He tossed the newspaper that was affixed to his hook on the ground, raising his ringed fingers to his forehead.

Buggy was just too much, too perfect. So he wouldn't admit it, and yet he was admitting it all the same. In a shy, silly way meant to gingerly shelter his pride- why, that was just his style, wasn't it? It should have been annoying, as immature and cowardly as it was. But it wasn't annoying, it was bewitching. Crocodile felt something warm at his center- that was joy wasn't it?

Well, that's what clowns were supposed to do. Make a person laugh, make them happy.

And Crocodile was unmistakably, hopelessly happy. He spread his arms wide in an inviting posture, crunching the cigar between his teeth.

"Equal exchange, huh? Why not, Buggy, why not!" he boomed, filling the room with his deep voice. "What do you want exactly? Hand job? Blow job? What's worth a cigar, to you, Mister Chairman?"

Buggy's shoulders tensed, and he stammered for a moment, his posture shifting inwards. Then he took several steps closer, until he was able to reach a cautious hand up to Crocodile's cheek.

"A kiss," he whispered, looking at the floor, "A kiss is good ... for now ..."

Damned clown. Damned blonde clown. Damned adorable blonde clown.

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Buggy couldn't believe it.

He'd been lucky before. Actually, many, many times before. In fact, it was getting absurd. Just how much good fortune was he going to stumble into?

Of course, not everything had been easy. Ever since Crocodile and Hawk-eyes had arrived at the island, ever since the formation of their unlikely organization, Buggy had been on high guard. Because he had a stupid, insane, unreasonable, flashy crush on the tall, sandman.

Since their first meeting in that dreary shower room of Impel Down, it had grown in strength and malice. Buggy had to constantly assess his reactions- when Crocodile hit him, did he look pained enough? When he called his name, did Buggy accidentally blush?

He couldn't find out. The worst thing would have been if Crocodile found out. Buggy could be a little delusional, he could admit that. But even he knew that in no universe would someone the Crocodile ever return his feelings, and the thought of his annoyed, disgusted face was enough to make Buggy want to crawl into a hole and die right there.

So he couldn't find out. Buggy needed to play it cool.

But it was harder and harder to do so. If the older man would have just left him alone, he could have done it. He was happy to avoid him, stay on his own side of the island, only meet with him when in the presence of Hawk-eyes and only discuss important business. But much to Buggy's despair, Crocodile seemed to enjoy treating him like a servant. It was just an extension of his disdain for the chairman, which made it all the more worse. And through those stupid tasks, Buggy kept finding himself dangerously close to the man.

How was he supposed to ignore his crush when he was up close and personal with him? He could observe him, see the sweat on his brow, the veins in his arms. The thickness of his fingers, the length of his legs. The sexy drawl of his voice, the intoxicating smell of musk and cigar smoke. And sometimes, he'd even catch Crocodile eyeing his hair- and that was really too much.

Buggy had even gone so far as to bleach it blonde, removing the *pretty* blue color- and somehow, that just made it worse. Crocodile looked at it *more*, sometimes even brushed his hook through it. Why!?? It was a flashy cruel trick of fate, sticking the two of them together!

Or, that's what he had thought.

But now, Crocodile was sitting before him, smiling, beckoning him closer. He'd even confessed- though Buggy wasn't naive enough to let himself believe it. It could still be a joke- this same man had called him ugly, after all. Made fun of his nose. Beat him up. There was no way he felt the same way Buggy did- no way!

There was no way ... but ... those handsome dark eyes were staring at him expectantly. And they were already so close, and he'd said he was okay with an *equal exchange*, and Buggy didn't actually have any cigars he could give him, but he was so close ... and Buggy liked him so much ...

He leaned in, tracing a gloved hand across his jaw and plucking away the cigar. Then their foreheads pressed together, and they were eye to eye, Crocodile sitting and Buggy leaning into the chair. Their mouths both slacked open, and neither of them were smiling, or blinking or breathing. The world blurred around them, and finally their lips touched.

It was an explosive, sultry, passionate kiss. Wet lips, hungry tongues, clashing teeth. Crocodile's hand danced up the small of the smaller man's back, and Buggy moaned and gripped fingers around his golden hook. And Crocodile moaned too, soft and husky, in response. The chairman was feeling really hot then, so he deepened the kiss, and the older man acquiesced, opening his large and letting Buggy explore it with fervor. They continued in this way, chins moving from side to side, fingers trembling against skin, tongues curling into each other, until they were both panting and flushed and smeared with red lipstick.

Buggy pulled back, spit trailing between their mouths in a lewd string. Crocodile smiled back at him, and unless he was mistaken, there was fondness in it. Buggy's heart swelled, and they embraced, the chairman's head pressing against Crocodile's soft, broad chest. And as his ear positioned against the silky, expensive fabric of his vest, the unmistakable sound of a fast-beating heart nearly took his breath.

Damn. He really was one lucky clown, huh?

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There was a long, narrow shower room located near an elevator in Impel Down. Being thrown into it was not a treat. But for two particular former prisoners, it became quite the fond memory. It was the place they first met, after all, and where they first began to fall in love.

## End Notes

I love these two together so much!!

I was nervous to write from Crocodile's perspective, he's so much harder than Buggy!! I think my brain works similarly to the clown's, so writing him isn't too hard ... but Crocodile ... well, I hope I did him justice!

Three cheers for these hopeless old men! May they fall deeper in love every day!! Huzzah!

Thanks for reading!

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